

desolating. It is in this light that the history of Richard's reign must be read.

The Commons' complaint, in so far as it reflected on the state of the King's Household, was taken up by the lords and made the basis of a settlement of the usual character. A Commission for the reform of the Court expenditure was appointed, and Archbishop Courtenay, who had been made Chancellor after the murder of Sudbury, surrendered the Great Seal to Lord Scrope, whose efficiency and honesty made him a general favourite.¹ These arrangements for better administration were effected by the united action of the two Houses. But the Commons must have been painfully aware that Parliamentary settlements and Household Commissions were too often cancelled or rendered futile by intrigues among the nobles before many months had gone by. Besides, there was one party to the settlement who had not been considered or consulted at all—namely, the King himself. It was Richard who was destined to overturn all these elaborate precautions.

This Parliament differed from all others of the period by being divided into two sessions. A Christmas recess, lasting till February, was occupied by the marriage of the King. He was now sixteen years old, and his ministers had been looking for a suitable match ever since he came to the throne. They had at last achieved what they regarded as a great diplomatic success. The traditional policy of the House of Bohemia had been alliance with France against England. The present King's blind grandfather had shown his devotion to that unfortunate cause by the memorable manner of his death on the field of Crecy, when the Bohemian plumes had been adopted by the Prince of Wales to commemorate the immortal victory. The reigning monarch, Wenceslaus, was also King of the Bomans—that is, heir to the German Empire. Charles the Fifth of France sought to ratify the old alliance by marrying Wenceslaus' sister Anne to his own son, but he was forestalled by English diplomacy, and the lady and the alliance were secured for Richard the Second. This result was due partly to the action of the Pope. Christendom had just been

¹ See Ap.